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PREDICTING ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION USING THREE
SELF-DISCLOSURE VARIABLES

by

Samantha S. Scapinello

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through Psychology
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2004

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Abstract

Three self-disclosure variables have been associated with romantic relationship satisfaction: (1) personal self-disclosure, (2) partner self-disclosure, and (3) the difference between the two. This study re-examines the relation between each of these self-disclosure variables and males' and females' romantic relationship satisfaction. This study also provides answers to two novel questions: (1) which self-disclosure variable best predicts males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and (2) which best predicts females' romantic relationship satisfaction. Participants were 124 heterosexual couples who completed the following four measures: the Background Inventory, the Self-Disclosure Index, the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, and the Relationship Assessment Scale. Results indicated that only two of the three self-disclosure variables (viz., personal self-disclosure and partner self-disclosure) predicted romantic relationship satisfaction. Although these variables were found to be equally good predictors of females' romantic relationship satisfaction, personal self-disclosure emerged as the best predictor of males' romantic relationship satisfaction. Stepwise multiple regressions supported correlations revealing that, for females, the optimal prediction model involved the interaction between personal and partner self-disclosure, whereas for males, the optimal prediction model involved only personal self-disclosure. A possible reason for this sex difference is discussed.

Dedication

For my parents, Marcia and Gary Scapinello, without you I would not be where I am today.

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Introduction

A great deal of research has been dedicated to the prediction of romantic relationship satisfaction (Whisman, 1997). Many variables predict this construct including length of relationship (Franzoi, Davis, & Young, 1985; Hendrick, 1981), children (Kurdek, 1999), general stress (Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999), love styles (Hendrick, Hendrick, & Adler, 1988; Meeks, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1998; Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999), attachment styles (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Tucker & Anders, 1999), commitment (Finkenauer & Hazam, 2000; Hendrick et al., 1988; Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999), spousal support (Merves-Okin, Amidon, & Bernt, 1991; Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999), and perspective-taking (Franzoi, et al., 1985; Meeks et al., 1998). However, self-disclosure variables are of particular importance because self-disclosure is a form of communication, and communication underlies most of the other variables (Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980).

Three self-disclosure variables have been associated with romantic relationship satisfaction: (1) personal self-disclosure (Franzoi et al., 1985; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984, Hendrick, 1981; Meeks et al., 1998; Hendrick et al., 1988; Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980; Merves-Okin et al., 1991; Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999), (2) partner self-disclosure (Hansen & Schuldt, 1984; Hendrick, 1981; Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980), and the difference between the two (Davidson, Balswick, & Halverson, 1983; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984). This study will determine which of these self-disclosure variables best predicts males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and which best predicts females' romantic relationship satisfaction. Before examining, in depth, the relation between each of the self-disclosure

variables and romantic relationship satisfaction, romantic relationship satisfaction and self-disclosure will be defined and discussed.

Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

For the most part, romantic relationship satisfaction has been conceptualized as a single dimension. At one extreme, *romantic relationship dissatisfaction* denotes an assessment of the relationship in which negative features are more prominent than positive features, whereas at the other extreme, *romantic relationship satisfaction* denotes an assessment of the relationship in which positive features are more prominent than negative features (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000). The one exception to this view is that of Fincham, Beach, and Kemp-Fincham (1997) who argue that romantic relationship satisfaction should be conceptualized as two-dimensional. In their two-dimensional conception of romantic relationship satisfaction an individual may indicate (a) many negative relational features and few positive relational features, (b) few negative relational features and many positive relational features, (c) many negative and many positive relational features, or (d) few negative and few positive relational features. Because the most widely used instruments for evaluating romantic relationship satisfaction conceptualize this construct as a single dimension (e.g., The Relationship Assessment Scale, Hendrick, 1988; The Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test, Locke & Wallace, 1959; Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Spanier, 1976), this study will also conceptualize romantic relationship satisfaction in this manner.

Importance of Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Romantic relationship satisfaction is associated with mental health (Berry & Worthington, 2001; Whisman, 1999; Whisman, Sheldon, & Goering, 2000). Whisman

(1999) assessed romantic relationship satisfaction among married respondents from the National Comorbidity Survey. After controlling for age and education, Whisman (1999) found that, for men, romantic relationship dissatisfaction was significantly related to major depression, dysthymia and alcohol dependence; and for women, to major depression, dysthymia, panic disorder, agoraphobia without panic, social phobia, simple phobia, generalized anxiety disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder. To evaluate the unique association between romantic relationship dissatisfaction and psychiatric disorders, Whisman (1999) conducted additional analyses controlling for comorbid disorders. Results showed that romantic relationship dissatisfaction was uniquely related to dysthymia for men, and to major depression and posttraumatic stress disorder for women.

Whisman and colleagues (2000) conducted a subsequent study using married participants who completed the Ontario Health Survey (Mental Health Supplement). After controlling for sociodemographic variables and quality of relationships with relatives and friends, they found that romantic relationship dissatisfaction was related to major depression, social phobia, simple phobia, panic, generalized anxiety disorder, and alcohol dependence/abuse for both men and women. Again, they evaluated the unique association between romantic relationship dissatisfaction and psychiatric disorders by controlling for comorbid disorders. Results indicated that romantic relationship dissatisfaction was uniquely related to major depression, simple phobia, generalized anxiety disorder, and alcohol dependence/abuse.

Unfortunately, because the data in these two studies were cross-sectional, causal inferences could not be made. Regrettably, few studies have evaluated the etiological

significance of romantic relationship dissatisfaction on the onset of psychiatric disorders (Whisman et al., 2000). In one of the few exceptions, Whisman and Bruce (1999) found that romantic relationship dissatisfaction at Time-1 was a risk factor for a major depressive episode at Time-2 (one year later) in participants who were not previously depressed. Specifically, individuals who were dissatisfied with their romantic relationships were approximately three times more likely to develop a major depressive episode than individuals who were satisfied with their romantic relationships. Moreover, the association between romantic relationship dissatisfaction and risk of a major depressive episode remained significant when controlling for demographic characteristics and depression history.

Although a causal link between romantic relationship dissatisfaction and the onset of psychiatric disorders has not yet been firmly established, there is increasing evidence to suggest that romantic relationship dissatisfaction influences the course of these disorders once they exist (Whisman, 1999). For example, agoraphobic individuals dissatisfied with their romantic relationships improve less during treatment and are more likely to relapse during follow-up than agoraphobic individuals satisfied with their romantic relationships (Milton & Hafner, 1979). Similarly, romantic relationship dissatisfaction was significantly related to relapse in unipolar depressives (Hooley & Teasdale, 1989). Since romantic relationship satisfaction is related to mental health, prediction of this construct is of utmost importance. As mentioned earlier, although many predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction have been found, self-disclosure variables are of particular importance.

Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure has been defined as the “revelation of one’s thoughts and feelings to another person” (Hendrick, 1981, p. 1150). This phenomenon has also been referred to by such terms as social accessibility (Rickers-Ovsiankina, 1956) and verbal accessibility (Polansky, 1965); however, for the most part, the literature dealing with this concept has labelled it self-disclosure (Wheless & Grotz, 1976). Self-disclosure has been viewed as either an enduring personality trait or a contextual behaviour (Finkenauer & Hazam, 2000). In reality, self-disclosure likely depends on both the individual’s personality and the context; therefore, the measure of self-disclosure used in this study is compatible with both perspectives. It assesses self-disclosure within a particular relationship, but does not rule out the possibility that self-disclosure is dispositional.

According to a review article by Boland and Follingstad (1987), self-disclosure is usually conceptualized in terms of frequency, breadth, depth, or valence (positive or negative quality of the information). A review of the literature reveals that present-day researchers rarely indicate how they conceptualize self-disclosure. Because these researchers typically measure self-disclosure with the Self-Disclosure Index (Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983), it may be assumed that they conceptualize self-disclosure in terms of breadth, since the authors of this measure conceptualize self-disclosure in this manner. However conceptualized, self-disclosure is usually thought of as a one-dimensional construct (Bograd & Spilka, 1996, Wheless, 1976). On the other hand, Wheless and Grotz (1976) view self-disclosure as multi-dimensional. They created a 32-item Likert-type instrument to measure self-disclosure on eight different dimensions: frequency, duration, depth, honesty, accuracy, intent, valence, and relevance to topic of

discussion. They then factor analyzed 249 participants' responses to this instrument. Orthogonal rotation produced a 5-factor solution: (1) amount of disclosure, including both frequency and duration time (three items), (2) depth of disclosure (three items), (3) honesty-accuracy of disclosure (four items), (4) intent of disclosure (three items), and (5) valence of disclosure (two items). Factor reliabilities were moderate, ranging from .61 to .74.

In an attempt to increase the factor reliabilities, Wheelless (1976) added new items to the instrument and factor analyzed it again using both an adult and undergraduate sample. Wheelless (1976) successfully increased the factor reliabilities in both samples and replicated the 5-factor solution in the adult sample. Wheelless (1976), however, was unable to replicate the 5-factor solution in the undergraduate sample. Likewise, other researchers have had difficulty reproducing the Wheelless Self-Disclosure Scale's factor structure (viz., Bograd & Spilka, 1996; Dickson-Markman, 1984). Because there is currently no adequate multi-dimensional measure of self-disclosure, self-disclosure in this study, as in most studies, will be conceptualized and measured as a one-dimensional construct. Specifically, it will be conceptualized and measured in terms of breadth.

Personal Self-Disclosure and Personal Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Research indicates that personal self-disclosure is positively related to personal romantic relationship satisfaction (Franzoi et al., 1985; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984, Hendrick, 1981; Hendrick et al., 1988; Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980; Meeks et al., 1998; Merves-Okin et al., 1991; Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999). To account for this finding, it has been suggested that by disclosing our relational needs, we enable our romantic relationship partners to meet them (Derlega & Grzelak, 1979; Derlega, Metts, Petronio, &

Margulis, 1993; Jourard, 1971). If our relational needs are being met, we will probably be more satisfied with our relationships than if our relational needs are not being met.

Jourard's hypothesis (1959), originally created to account for the finding that liking another person is a result of having disclosed to them, may also prove relevant. Jourard (1959) and others suggest that self-disclosure results in positive feelings because it is cathartic (Davis & Franzoi, 1987; Derlega & Grzelak, 1979; Stiles, 1987). Jourard (1959) further suggests that these positive feelings become associated with the recipient of the disclosure and increase liking. Greater liking for one's romantic relationship partner will most likely result in greater romantic relationship satisfaction.

The view that self-disclosure invariably results in positive feelings has not been supported by the literature. For example, discussing a traumatic event and writing about a traumatic event have both been shown to decrease positive feelings (Donnelly & Murray, 1991). Further, writing about a traumatic event has been shown to increase negative feelings (Donnelly & Murray, 1991; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986). If the traumatic event is revisited in writing, there continues to be a decrease in positive feelings and an increase in negative feelings; however, if the traumatic event is revisited verbally, positive feelings are maintained and negative feelings decrease (Donnelly & Murray, 1991). Perhaps it is a reduction of negative feelings that result in greater liking rather than an increase in positive feelings as suggested by Jourard (1959). Although written disclosures do not result in a reduction of negative feelings or an increase in positive feelings, they are probably relatively rare in romantic relationships.

Partner Self-Disclosure and Personal Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Research also indicates that partner self-disclosure is positively related to personal romantic relationship satisfaction (Hendrick, 1981; Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980; Meeks et al., 1998; Merves-Okin et al., 1991). To account for this finding, disclosure has been viewed as a rewarding or positive outcome for the recipient because it communicates the discloser's liking, trust, and desire to initiate a more intimate relationship (Collins & Miller, 1994; Derlega & Grzelak, 1979).

Self-Disclosure Discrepancy and Personal Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

The two self-disclosure variables, discussed above, have been well researched. Self-disclosure discrepancy (i.e., the difference between personal and partner self-disclosure), on the other hand, has been the focus of very few studies. The studies that have been done suggest that this self-disclosure variable is negatively related to personal romantic relationship satisfaction (Davidson et al., 1983; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984). For example, Hansen and Schuldt (1984) found that self-disclosure discrepancy was negatively related to husbands' marital satisfaction. Conversely, self-disclosure discrepancy was not related to wives' marital satisfaction in this study. However, the authors measured self-disclosure with Jourard's Self-Disclosure Questionnaire, an instrument shown to have serious predictive validity problems (Cozby, 1973; Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983).

Davidson et al. (1983) investigated the relation between affective self-disclosure and marital adjustment and found that, for both husbands and wives, lower levels of marital adjustment were related to being "over-benefited in love-and-happiness disclosure" (p. 96). They also found that, for wives, lower levels of marital adjustment

were related to being “under-benefited in love disclosure” (p. 96). Davidson et al. (1983) have used the third proposition of equity theory to explain why self-disclosure discrepancy is negatively related to personal romantic relationship satisfaction. This proposition states that “when individuals find themselves participating in inequitable relationships, they will become distressed. The more inequitable the relationship, the more distress individuals will feel” (Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978, p. 6).

Summary and Hypotheses

The prediction of romantic relationship satisfaction is vital in light of its significant relation to mental health (Berry & Worthington, 2001; Whisman, 1999; Whisman et al., 2000). Many variables have been shown to predict this construct. However, self-disclosure variables are of particular importance because self-disclosure is a form of communication, and communication underlies most of the other variables (Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980). Three self-disclosure variables have been associated with romantic relationship satisfaction: (1) personal self-disclosure, (2) partner self-disclosure, and (3) self-disclosure discrepancy. The present study will re-examine the relation between each of these self-disclosure variables and males’ and females’ romantic relationship satisfaction.

1. Based on research by Hendrick et al. (1981), Meeks et al. (1998), and Merves-Okin et al. (1991), who showed that personal self-disclosure is positively related to personal romantic relationship satisfaction, it is hypothesized that (a) males’ self-disclosure will be positively related to males’ romantic relationship satisfaction, and that (b) females’ self-disclosure will be positively related to females’ romantic relationship satisfaction.

2. Based on research by Hendrick (1981), Meeks et al. (1998), and Merves-Okin et al. (1991), who showed that partner self-disclosure is positively related to personal romantic relationship satisfaction, it is hypothesized that (a) females' self-disclosure will be positively related to males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and that (b) males' self-disclosure will be positively related to females' romantic relationship satisfaction.
3. Based on research by Davidson et al. (1983) and Hansen and Schuldt (1984), who showed that self-disclosure discrepancy is negatively related to personal romantic relationship satisfaction, it is hypothesized that self-disclosure discrepancy will be negatively related (a) to males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and (b) to females' romantic relationship satisfaction.

The three self-disclosure variables will then be compared to determine (a) which self-disclosure variable best predicts males' romantic relationship satisfaction and, (b) which best predicts females' romantic relationship satisfaction. A review of the literature indicates that these research questions have not yet been addressed.

Method

Participants

The full sample consisted of 124 heterosexual couples. Each couple was composed of a University of Windsor student enrolled in a psychology course at the time of the study, and his or her significant other. After reviewing the data and making the necessary adjustments, the final sample consisted of 115 couples (115 men and 115 women)¹. The following information is based on this slightly reduced sample. The average age of male participants was 22.01 years ($SD = 4.52$), ranging from 17 to 54

¹ This process is described in the results section.

years; the average age of female participants was 20.70 years ($SD = 4.77$), ranging from 17 to 56 years. Male and female participants were well educated, with approximately half of each sex having completed at least one year of university (for males, 62.6%; for females, 47.8%). Male participants had on average 2.39 prior relationships ($N = 114$, $SD = 2.27$), and female participants had on average 2.36 prior relationships ($N = 114$, $SD = 2.10$). The average length of relationship, according to males, was 27.01 months ($N = 114$, $SD = 42.76$), ranging from 1 month to 373 months; the average length of relationship, according to females, was 27.47 months ($SD = 43.42$), ranging from 1 month to 372 months. The majority of couples were childless (93.0%), unmarried (95.7%), and not living together (85.2%). All participants were treated in accordance with the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (American Psychological Association, 1992). Further, ethics approval for this study was obtained from the University of Windsor's Research Ethics Board.

Measures

The Background Inventory (see Appendix A) was designed by the author to record the participant's birth date, his/her partner's birth date, his/her sex, cohabiting status, marital status, number of children, length of current relationship, number of past relationships, and level of education.

The Self-Disclosure Index (SDI; Miller et al., 1983; see Appendix B) is a 10-item Likert measure that assesses the breadth of personal information an individual has revealed to a particular target person. In this study, the target person was the participant's romantic relationship partner. The response format ranges from 0 = "*not at all*" to 4 = "*fully and completely*." Total scores on this measure can range from 0 to 40,

where higher scores reflect greater self-disclosure. Sample items include “*I discuss what makes me the person I am with my romantic relationship partner*” and “*I discuss my worst fears with my romantic relationship partner.*” The authors’ factor analysis of the SDI suggests that all items load on a single factor for both males and females. Further, their reliability analysis suggests that the internal consistency of this measure is more than adequate, varying from $\alpha = .87$ to $.93$ for men, and $\alpha = .86$ to $.93$ for women, depending on the target person. In the present study, α reliability was $.79$ for men, and $.78$ for women (see Table 1).

The Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976; see Appendix C) is one of four subscales that together compose the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale is considered by some scholars to be the most psychometrically sound instrument of marital adjustment available (Follette & Jacobson, 1985). Content, criterion-related, and construct validity have all been established and internal consistency is high ($\alpha = .96$; Spanier, 1976). According to research, internal consistency is similarly high for the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale ($\alpha = .94$; Spanier, 1976). This subscale, which will be referred to as the DSS, consists of 10 items. The response format varies. For five of the first seven items, including “*How often do you and your partner quarrel?*” the response categories range from 0 = “*all the time*” to 5 = “*never*,” whereas for two of the first seven items, including “*In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well,*” the response categories range from 0 = “*never*” to 5 = “*all the time.*” The response categories for the eighth item range from 0 = “*never*” to 4 = “*every day.*” The response categories for the ninth item range from 0 = “*extremely unhappy*” to 6 = “*perfect.*” And the response categories for the tenth item range from 0 = “*My*

relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going” to 5 = *“I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.”* Higher scores indicate greater romantic relationship satisfaction.

As suggested by Hendrick (1988), limited changes were made in four of the items to render the DSS more suitable for dating couples. In two items, the word “*mate*” was changed to the word “*partner*.” A third item, “*How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight*” was changed to “*How often do you or your partner just ‘leave’ after a fight*” and a fourth item, “*Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)*” was changed to “*Do you ever regret that you two got together.*” A fifth item, which assesses the extent to which partners confide in each other, was omitted from the subscale because it is similar to items on the Self-Disclosure Index. Retaining this item would have resulted in a spurious correlation between these two measures. In the present study, α reliability for this modified version of the DSS was .82 for men and .76 for women (see Table 1).

The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988; see Appendix D) is a 7-item Likert measure of general relationship satisfaction. There are five response categories for each item but their content differs from item to item. For example, the response categories for the item “*In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?*” range from 1 = “*unsatisfied*” to 5 = “*extremely satisfied*,” whereas the response categories for the item “*How many problems are there in your relationship?*” range from 1 = “*very few*” to 5 = “*very many*.” Negatively worded items (i.e., items 4 and 7) are recoded prior to summation so that higher scores indicate greater relationship

satisfaction. According to research, this measure has good test-retest reliability ($r = .85$ after a 6-week interval; Hendrick, Dicke, & Clyde; 1998) and internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$; Hendrick, 1988). In the present study, α reliability for this measure was .79 for men and .81 for women (see Table 1).

Procedure

Students enrolled in psychology courses at the University of Windsor learned of the study via a sign-up sheet posted on the psychology bulletin board (see Appendix E). The sign-up sheet directed students both interested in the study and involved in a heterosexual relationship of at least one month to recruit their relationship partners and then sign up under the time slot of their choosing. There was room for six psychology students to sign up under each time slot. The sheet instructed students who signed-up to go to a specific room on campus, with their partners, at their chosen time. Students and their partners were given consent forms upon arrival (see Appendix F). After written consent was obtained, the researcher distributed the questionnaires.

All questionnaires were numbered. Members of a couple received questionnaires with the same number so that proper identification of couples could be made. Participants were seated sufficiently far apart to ensure a sense of privacy and anonymity. In addition, members of a couple were not allowed to sit next to each other or to communicate during the testing session. Participants completed the Background Inventory first, followed by the Self-Disclosure Index (Miller et al., 1983), the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976), and the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988). The relationship inventories were presented last because it was suspected that these measures would be the most threatening. Testing lasted approximately 20 minutes.

Participants placed completed questionnaires in a box at the front of the room. Each participant received either a bonus mark (if he or she was registered in a psychology course that permitted students to earn bonus marks) or a scratch-and-win lottery ticket (if he or she was not in a psychology course that permitted students to earn bonus marks) simply for coming to the testing session. In other words, obtaining compensation was not dependent on completing the questionnaire.

Results

Initial Review of Data

The full sample consisted of 124 couples. To ensure couple status, data from couples in which both partners were unable to accurately report their significant others' birth date were deleted. This resulted in the elimination of four couples. Although the resulting data set was not complete, no test item was missing more than six participants' responses. Before running the analyses, missing responses to test items on the SDI, the RAS, and the DSS were estimated using the mean substitution method (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In addition, individuals who received extreme scores (i.e., scores greater than 3 times the interquartile range) on any of these measures were deleted, along with their partners, to ensure that they would not have any undue influence on the results (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). This resulted in the elimination of five more couples. Thus, the final sample consisted of 115 couples (115 men and 115 women).

Means and standard deviations were calculated for all self-disclosure and romantic relationship satisfaction variables (see Table 1). Before testing the hypotheses, sex differences in self-disclosure and romantic relationship satisfaction were evaluated. The difference between males' and females' self-disclosure was significant,

$t(114) = 3.44, p = .001$. Specifically, females were more self-disclosing than males. Further, the difference between males' and females' romantic relationship satisfaction was significant when romantic relationship was measured by the RAS, $t(114) = 2.96, p = .004$; and marginally significant when it was measured by the DSS, $t(114) = 1.91, p = .058$. Specifically, females were more satisfied with their relationships than males.

Testing the Hypotheses

Pearson correlations were computed among males' and females' self-disclosure (measured by the SDI), self-disclosure discrepancy (computed as the absolute difference between partners' self-disclosure scores), and males' and females' romantic relationship satisfaction (measured by the RAS and the DSS). See Table 1.

It was hypothesized that (1a) males' self-disclosure would be positively related to males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and that (1b) females' self-disclosure would be positively related to females' romantic relationship satisfaction. Consistent with hypothesis-1a, significant correlations were found between males' self-disclosure and males' romantic relationship satisfaction using the RAS, $r(114) = .44, p < .001$; and the DSS, $r(114) = .42, p < .001$. Similarly, consistent with hypothesis-1b, significant correlations were found between females' self-disclosure and females' romantic relationship satisfaction using the RAS, $r(114) = .53, p < .001$; and the DSS, $r(114) = .35, p < .001$.

It was also hypothesized that (2a) females' self-disclosure would be positively related to males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and that (2b) males' self-disclosure would be positively related to females' romantic relationship satisfaction. Consistent with hypothesis-2a, a significant correlation was found between females' self-disclosure

and males' romantic relationship satisfaction using the RAS, $r(114) = .26, p = .005$, and a marginally significant correlation was found between these two variables using the DSS, $r(114) = .18, p = .057$. Similarly, consistent with hypothesis-2b, significant correlations were found between males' self-disclosure and females' romantic relationship satisfaction using the RAS, $r(114) = .43, p < .001$; and the DSS, $r(114) = .33, p < .001$.

Finally, it was hypothesized that self-disclosure discrepancy would be negatively related (3a) to males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and (3b) to females' romantic relationship satisfaction. Neither of these hypotheses was confirmed.

Answering the Research Questions

Males' self-disclosure and females' self-disclosure were compared using the Williams (1959) test for non-independent correlations in order to determine which self-disclosure variable would best predict (a) males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and (b) females' romantic relationship satisfaction. Self-disclosure discrepancy was not compared with the other self-disclosure variables (i.e., males' self-disclosure and females' self-disclosure) because its nonsignificant correlations to males' and females' romantic relationship satisfaction suggested that it would not be the best predictor of either of these satisfaction variables.

The difference between (a) the correlation of males' self-disclosure and males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and (b) the correlation of females' self-disclosure and males' romantic relationship was significant when males' romantic relationship satisfaction was measured by the RAS ($r = .44$ versus $.26$, respectively), $t(111) = 2.08, p = .040$; and when it was measured by the DSS ($r = .42$ versus $.18$, respectively),

$t(111) = 2.75, p = .007$. Specifically, males' self-disclosure was a better predictor than females' self-disclosure of males' romantic relationship satisfaction. By contrast, the difference between (a) the correlation of males' self-disclosure and females' romantic relationship satisfaction, and (b) the correlation of females' self-disclosure and females' romantic relationship satisfaction was not significant when females' romantic relationship was measured by the RAS ($r = .43$ versus $.53$, respectively), $t(111) = 1.41, p = .161$; or when it was measured by the DSS ($r = .33$ versus $.35$, respectively), $t(111) = .43, p = .668$. In other words, both self-disclosure variables were equally good predictors of females' romantic relationship satisfaction.

Multiple Regressions

Males' Romantic Relationship Satisfaction. Two stepwise multiple regressions, neither of which assumed an intercept of zero, were conducted in SPSS, in order to discover the optimal prediction model of males' romantic relationship satisfaction (see Table 2). In the first regression, males' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the RAS) was entered as the dependent variable, and males' self-disclosure, females' self-disclosure, and the interaction between the two (calculated by multiplying males' and females' self-disclosure scores) were entered as the predictor variables. The final optimal prediction model involved only males' self-disclosure.

In the second regression, males' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the DSS) was entered as the dependent variable. Again, the final optimal prediction model involved only males' self-disclosure. Further, the results were similar to those produced in the first regression.

Females' Romantic Relationship Satisfaction. Two other stepwise multiple regression models, neither of which assumed an intercept of zero, were conducted in SPSS, in order to discover the optimal prediction model of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (see Table 2). In the first regression, females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the RAS) was entered as the dependent variable, and males' self-disclosure, females' self-disclosure, and the interaction between the two were entered as the predictor variables. The final optimal prediction model involved only the interaction term.

In order to investigate this interaction, four new variables were created: two by performing a median split on males' self-disclosure ($Mdn = 34$) and two by performing a median split on females' self-disclosure ($Mdn = 35$). Using these new variables, six comparisons were made (see Table 3). The first two comparisons were made using a one-way ANOVA. First, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the RAS) for low self-disclosing females ($M = 29.77, n = 43$) was compared to that of high self-disclosing females ($M = 32.61, n = 28$) when males' self-disclosure was low. The difference between these means was significant, $F(1, 69) = 11.73, p = .001$. Second, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the RAS) for low self-disclosing females ($M = 31.95, n = 19$) was compared to that of high self-disclosing females ($M = 33.11, n = 25$) when males' self-disclosure was high. The difference between these means was not significant, $F(1, 42) = 3.22, p = .080$.

The second two comparisons were made using a second one-way ANOVA. First, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the RAS) for low self-disclosing males ($M = 29.77, n = 43$) was compared to that of high self-disclosing

males ($M = 31.95, n = 19$) when females' self-disclosure was low. The difference between these means was significant, $F(1, 60) = 4.81, p = .032$. Second, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the RAS) for low self-disclosing males ($M = 32.61, n = 28$) was compared to that of high self-disclosing males ($M = 33.11, n = 25$) when females' self-disclosure was high. The difference between these means was not significant, $F(1, 51) = .80, p = .375$.

The final two comparisons were made using post-hoc comparisons. First, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the RAS) for low self-disclosing females when males' self-disclosure was low ($M = 29.77, n = 43$) was compared to that of high self-disclosing females when males' self-disclosure was high ($M = 33.11, n = 25$). The difference between these means was significant, $F(1, 66) = 18.41, p < .001$. Second, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the RAS) for high self-disclosing females when males' self-disclosure was low ($M = 32.61, n = 28$) was compared to that of low self-disclosing females when males' self-disclosure was high ($M = 31.95, n = 19$). The difference between these means was not significant, $F(1, 45) = .87, p = .357$.

In the second regression, females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the DSS) was entered as the dependent variable. Again, the final optimal prediction model involved only the interaction term. Further, the results were similar to those produced in the first regression.

The procedure used to investigate this interaction was the same as the one used to investigate the first interaction. Again, six comparisons were made (see Table 4). The first two comparisons were made using a one-way ANOVA. First, the mean of females'

romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the DSS) for low self-disclosing females ($M = 34.90, n = 43$) was compared to that of high-self disclosing females ($M = 37.25, n = 28$) when males' self-disclosure was low. The difference between these means was significant, $F(1, 69) = 5.69, p = .020$. Second, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the DSS) for low self-disclosing females ($M = 36.32, n = 19$) was compared to that of high self-disclosing females ($M = 37.54, n = 25$) when males' self-disclosure was high. The difference between these means was not significant, $F(1, 42) = 1.58, p = .216$.

The second two comparisons were made using a second one-way ANOVA. First, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the DSS) for low self-disclosing males ($M = 34.90, n = 43$) was compared to that of high self-disclosing males ($M = 36.32, n = 19$) when females' self-disclosure was low. The difference between these means was not significant, $F(1, 60) = 1.54, p = .219$. Second, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the DSS) for low self-disclosing males ($M = 37.25, n = 28$) was compared to that of high self-disclosing males ($M = 37.54, N = 25$) when females' self-disclosure was high. The difference between these means was not significant, $F(1, 51) = .10, p = .751$.

The final two comparisons were made using post-hoc comparisons. First, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the DSS) for low self-disclosing females when males' self-disclosure was low ($M = 34.90, n = 43$) was compared to that of high self-disclosing females when males' self-disclosure was high ($M = 37.54, n = 25$). The difference between these means was significant,

$F(1, 66) = 8.19, p = .006$. Second, the mean of females' romantic relationship satisfaction (as measured by the DSS) for high self-disclosing females when males' self-disclosure was low ($M = 37.25, n = 28$) was compared to that of low self-disclosing females when males' self-disclosure was high ($M = 36.32, n = 19$). The difference between these means was not significant, $F(1, 45) = .76, p = .387$.

Note, self-disclosure discrepancy could not be entered as a predictor variable in any of the above stepwise multiple regressions because the variables it was created from (i.e., males' self-disclosure and females' self-disclosure) were already being entered as predictor variables. Adding all three of these variables would yield a multicollinearity problem. It was assumed that self-disclosure discrepancy would not be involved in an optimal prediction model of either males' or females' romantic relationship satisfaction anyway given its primarily nonsignificant correlations with males' and females' romantic relationship satisfaction.

Discussion

Three self-disclosure variables have been associated with romantic relationship satisfaction: (1) personal self-disclosure (Hendrick et al., 1981; Meeks et al., 1998; Mervies-Okin et al., 1991), (2) partner self-disclosure (Hendrick et al., 1981; Meeks et al., 1998; Mervies-Okin et al., 1991), and (3) self-disclosure discrepancy (Davidson et al., 1983; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984). This study re-examines the relation between each of these self-disclosure variables and males' and females' romantic relationship satisfaction. This study also provides answers to two novel questions: (1) which self-disclosure variable best predicts males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and (2) which best predicts females' romantic relationship satisfaction.

No hypotheses were made with respect to sex differences in self-disclosure and romantic relationship satisfaction. Nevertheless, these sex differences were evaluated for interest's sake. In line with previous research, females were found to be more self-disclosing than males (e.g., Cozby, 1973; Dindia & Allen, 1992; Hendrick, 1980; Meeks et al., 1998). They were also found to be more satisfied with their relationships. This finding is consistent with previous research on unmarried couples (e.g., Attridge, Berscheid, & Simpson, 1995; Sacher & Fine, 1996). However, it conflicts with previous research on married couples, which reports a sex difference in the opposite direction (e.g., Fowers, 1991; Schumm, Webb, & Bollman, 1998). Given that the majority of the couples in this study were unmarried (95.7%), the direction of the sex difference found was understandable.

Previous research has demonstrated that personal self-disclosure is positively related to personal romantic relationship satisfaction (Franzoi et al., 1985; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984; Hendrick, 1981; Hendrick et al., 1988; Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980; Meeks et al., 1998; Merves-Okin et al., 1991; Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999). Based on this, it was hypothesized that (a) males' self-disclosure would be positively related to males' romantic relationship satisfaction and that (b) females' self-disclosure would be positively related to females' romantic relationship satisfaction. Both these hypotheses were confirmed. In other words, males and females who disclosed personal information felt happier in their relationships. Two explanations have been proposed to account for these findings.

The first explanation is based on two tenets: (1) By disclosing our relational needs, we enable our romantic relationship partners to meet them; and (2) Greater

fulfillment of our relational needs results in greater personal romantic relationship satisfaction (Derlega & Grzelak, 1979; Derlega et al., 1993; Jourard, 1971). This explanation proposes that only one type of self-disclosure relates to romantic relationship satisfaction (i.e., disclosure of relational needs). The self-disclosure scale used in this study (i.e., Self-Disclosure Index) measures several types of self-disclosure but does not specifically target disclosure of relational needs. Therefore, this explanation cannot be used to explain the relation between personal self-disclosure and personal romantic relationship satisfaction found in this study. The second explanation, on the other hand, can be used to explain this relation. This explanation is also based on two tenets: (1) Personal self-disclosure results in positive feelings that become associated with the recipient of the disclosure and increase liking, and (2) Greater liking for our romantic relationship partner results in greater personal romantic relationship satisfaction (Davis & Franzoi, 1987; Derlega & Grzelak, 1979; Jourard, 1959; Stiles, 1987).

Previous research has also demonstrated that partner self-disclosure is positively related to personal romantic relationship satisfaction (Hendrick, 1981; Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980; Meeks et al., 1998; Merves-Okin et al., 1991). Based on this, it was hypothesized that (a) females' self-disclosure would be positively related to males' romantic relationship satisfaction and that (b) males' self-disclosure would be positively related to females' romantic relationship satisfaction. Again, both hypotheses were confirmed. In other words, males and females who disclosed personal information had romantic relationship partners who felt happier in their relationships. One explanation has been proposed to account for these findings. This explanation is based on two tenets: (1) Partner self-disclosure is viewed as rewarding for the recipient because it

communicates liking, trust, and desire to initiate a more intimate relationship, and (2) Greater rewards from our romantic relationship partner results in greater personal romantic relationship satisfaction (Collins & Miller, 1994; Derlega & Grzelack, 1979).

Finally, previous research has demonstrated that self-disclosure discrepancy is negatively related to personal romantic relationship satisfaction (Davidson et al., 1983; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984). Based on this research, it was hypothesized that self-disclosure would be negatively related (a) to males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and (b) to females' romantic relationship satisfaction. Neither of these hypotheses was confirmed. There are three possible explanations for the difference in findings between previous research and the present study.

To begin, self-disclosure discrepancy in the present study was computed as the absolute difference between partners' self-disclosure scores. Although it was not clear how Davidson et al. (1983) computed this variable, Hansen and Schuldt (1984) computed it differently. Specifically, they computed self-disclosure discrepancy as the difference between partners' self-disclosure scores and then looked at overbenefited (i.e., those who received an equal or greater amount of disclosure than they gave provided) and underbenefited individuals (i.e., those who received an equal or lesser amount of disclosure than they provided) separately.

Further, the majority of the couples in the present study were dating (97.5%), whereas those in the Davidson et al. (1983) and Hansen and Schuldt (1984) studies were married (100%). Inequity in self-disclosure may be less distressing for dating couples than it is for married couples because it is easier for these couples to end their relationship should the inequity continue.

Finally, the mean length of relationship in the present study was approximately 2.3 years. Although Davidson et al. (1983) and Hansen and Schuldt (1984) did not report the mean length of relationship in their studies, we can assume that it would have been greater than 2.3 as their couples had been married for 2.9 and 3.2 years, respectively. Since research suggests that self-disclosure reciprocity (i.e., attempting to match your conversation partner's level of self-disclosure) declines with familiarity, the couples in the present study were likely more similar in self-disclosure than the couples in the Davidson et al. (1983) and Hansen and Schuldt (1984) studies (Derlega, Wilson, & Chaikin, 1976; Morton, 1978). The larger correlation between males' self-disclosure and females' self-disclosure found in this study (i.e., .48) and that reported in the Hansen and Schuldt (1984) study (i.e., -.09) provides some support for this assumption. If the couples in the present study were more similar in self-disclosure than the couples in the Davidson et al. (1983) and Hansen and Schuldt (1984) studies, it may have been more difficult to detect a relation between self-disclosure discrepancy and romantic relationship satisfaction in this study than in the aforementioned studies.

Answering the Research Questions

The first of two research questions asked, "Which self-disclosure variable best predicts males' romantic relationship satisfaction?" Although two of the three self-disclosure variables predicted males' romantic relationship satisfaction (viz., males' self-disclosure, females' self-disclosure), males' self-disclosure was the best predictor. Further, the regressions indicated that it was the only predictor to account for unique variance in males' romantic relationship satisfaction. Specifically, it was discovered that low self-disclosing males were less satisfied with their relationships than high

self-disclosing males.

The second research question asked, “Which self-disclosure variable best predicts females’ romantic relationship satisfaction?” Again, two of the three self-disclosure variables predicted females’ romantic relationship satisfaction (viz., males’ self-disclosure and females’ self-disclosure), however, neither of these variables emerged as the best predictor (i.e., they were equally good predictors). Moreover, the regressions indicated that it was the interaction of these variables that accounted for unique variance in females’ romantic relationship satisfaction rather than either of them alone or together. Specifically, it was discovered that low self-disclosing females with low self-disclosing partners were less satisfied with their relationships than either (1) low self-disclosing females with high self-disclosing partners², (2) high self-disclosing females with low self-disclosing partners, or (3) high self-disclosing females with high self-disclosing partners. In other words, females’ in relationships in which both partners are low in self-disclosure are less satisfied than females’ in relationships in which at least one partner is high in self-disclosure. Since, (a) males’ romantic relationship satisfaction is greatest when males’ self-disclosure is high, and (b) females’ romantic relationship satisfaction is greatest when either (or both) partners’ self-disclosure is high, the easiest way to improve a couples’ romantic relationship satisfaction is to increase males’ self-disclosure.

² This was only true when romantic relationship satisfaction was measured by the RAS. When romantic relationship satisfaction was measured by the DSS, there was no significant difference between low self-disclosing females with low self-disclosing partners and low self-disclosing females with high self-disclosing partners.

The present study shows that there is a sex difference with respect to which self-disclosure variables contribute unique variance to romantic relationship satisfaction. This sex difference needs to be replicated in order ensure that it is robust. If it is supported, the question becomes: Why does partner self-disclosure play a role in predicting females' romantic relationship satisfaction but not males' romantic relationship satisfaction? Recall that partner self-disclosure is assumed to relate to personal romantic relationship satisfaction because it is viewed as rewarding by the recipient of the disclosure (Collins & Miller, 1994; Derlega & Grzelack, 1979). If this assumption is true, one possible explanation for this sex difference is as follows: Women find partner self-disclosure more rewarding than men do. One study suggests that this may be the case. Specifically, Regan and Sprecher (1995) found that women value a partner who is a "good communicator" more than men do. Since receiving something one values is rewarding, this finding could be rephrased as follows: Women find a partner who is a "good communicator" more rewarding than men do. Given that women find a partner who is a "good communicator" more rewarding than men do, it seems likely that they would also find partner communication, such as partner self-disclosure, more rewarding than men do.

Strengths, Limitations and Future Research

This study contributes to our understanding of romantic relationship satisfaction by providing answers to two novel questions: (1) which self-disclosure variable best predicts males' romantic relationship satisfaction, and (2) which best predicts females' romantic relationship satisfaction. Nevertheless, several limitations to this study must be noted so that they can be addressed in future research. First of all, the participants in this

study were not clinically referred and were, for the most part, young, well-educated, childless, unmarried, and living separate from their romantic relationship partners. It is possible that participants with a different combination of characteristics would have different associations between the self-disclosure variables and romantic relationship satisfaction. For example, given that depressed individuals' self-disclosures are likely to be primarily negative in nature and thus potentially aversive for the recipient, partners of depressed individuals may demonstrate a negative, rather than a positive, relation between partner self-disclosure and personal romantic relationship satisfaction.

Secondly, this study was correlational in nature. It is not yet known whether self-disclosure and romantic relationship satisfaction are causally related. Hendrick (1981), however, speculates a two-way directionality between these variables, with self-disclosure sometimes increasing romantic relationship satisfaction and romantic relationship satisfaction sometimes increasing self-disclosure. Thirdly, self-disclosure in this study was conceptualized and measured solely in terms of breadth. Although this is quite typical, there is evidence to suggest other dimensions of self-disclosure (e.g., honesty/intent, valence, etc.) may also predict romantic relationship satisfaction (Bograd & Spilka, 1996; Dickson-Markman, 1984). Finally, the measure of self-disclosure used in this study was a self-report measure. Participants' reports of self-disclosure may not represent their actual behaviour. In fact, past research has found that married individuals tend to overestimate the extent of their self-disclosure (Shapiro & Swenson, 1969).

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Appendix A

The Background Inventory

1. What is your birth date?

Day _____ Month _____ Year _____

2. What is your romantic relationship partner's birth date?

Day _____ Month _____ Year _____

3. What is your sex?

Male Female

4. Do you currently live with your romantic relationship partner?

Yes No

5. Are you currently married to your romantic relationship partner?

Yes No

6. (a) Do you have children from a prior relationship?

Yes No

(b) If yes, how many?

7. (a) Does your romantic relationship partner have children from a prior relationship?

Yes No

(b) If yes, how many?

8. (a) Have you and your romantic relationship partner had children?

Yes No

- (b) If yes, how many?

9. How long have you and your romantic relationship partner been a couple?

Years _____ Months _____ Weeks _____

10. Apart from your current romantic relationship, how many romantic relationships have you been in that have lasted for one month or more?

Appendix B

The Self-Disclosure Index (Miller et al., 1983)

1. I discuss my personal habits with my insert specific target person.

not at all					fully and completely
0	1	2	3	4	

2. I discuss things I have done which I feel guilty about with my insert specific target person.

not at all					fully and completely
0	1	2	3	4	

3. I discuss things I wouldn't do in public with my insert specific target person.

not at all					fully and completely
0	1	2	3	4	

4. I discuss my deepest feelings with my insert specific target person.

not at all					fully and completely
0	1	2	3	4	

5. I discuss what I like and dislike about myself with my insert specific target person.

not at all					fully and completely
0	1	2	3	4	

6. I discuss what is important to me in life with my insert specific target person.

not at all					fully and completely
0	1	2	3	4	

7. I discuss what makes me the person I am with my insert specific target person.

not at all				fully and completely
0	1	2	3	4

8. I discuss my worst fears with my insert specific target person.

not at all				fully and completely
0	1	2	3	4

9. I discuss things I have done which I am proud of with my insert specific target person.

not at all				fully and completely
0	1	2	3	4

10. I discuss my close relationships with other people with my insert specific target person.

not at all				fully and completely
0	1	2	3	4

Appendix C

The Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976)

1. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?

All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
0	1	2	3	4	5

2. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?

All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
0	1	2	3	4	5

3. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?

All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1	0

4. Do you confide in your mate?

All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
0	1	2	3	4	5

5. Do you ever regret that you married? (*or lived together*)

All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
0	1	2	3	4	5

6. How often do you and your partner quarrel?

All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
0	1	2	3	4	5

7. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves?"

All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
0	1	2	3	4	5

8. Do you kiss your mate?

Every Day	Almost Every Day	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
4	3	2	1	0

9. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Extremely <u>Unhappy</u>	Fairly <u>Unhappy</u>	A Little <u>Unhappy</u>	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect

10. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? (Please check the most appropriate statement.)

_____ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and *would go to almost any length* to see that it does.

_____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and *will do all I can* to see that it does.

_____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and *will do my fair share* to see that it does.

_____ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but *I can't do much more than I am doing* now to help it succeed.

_____ It would be nice if it succeeded, but *I refuse to do any more than I am doing* now to keep the relationship going.

_____ My relationship can never succeed, and *there is no more that I can do* to keep the relationship going.

Appendix D

The Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988)

1. How well does your partner meet your needs?

poorly				extremely well
1	2	3	4	5

2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

unsatisfied				satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

3. How good is your relationship compared to most others?

poor				excellent
1	2	3	4	5

4. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?

never				very often
1	2	3	4	5

5. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?

hardly at all				completely
1	2	3	4	5

6. How much do you love your partner?

not much				very much
1	2	3	4	5

7. How many problems are there in your relationship?

very few				very many
1	2	3	4	5

Appendix E

The Sign-up Sheet

Department of Psychology
Participant Recruitment Posting

Title of Study: Predicting Romantic Relationship Satisfaction using Three Self-Disclosure Variables

Description of Study: The purpose of this study is to predict romantic relationship satisfaction using personal self-disclosure, partner self-disclosure, and the difference between the two.

Type of Research: Faculty: _____ M.A./Ph.D. Graduate Student: X Honours Student: _____

You may participate in this study if: _____ **You have already been contacted** by telephone or email by the researcher or research assistant and **have an appointment** to attend one of the testing sessions scheduled for this week. See posted locations/times to the right.

X **You meet the following criteria and sign yourself up** on the sign-up sheet posted to the right. In order to participate, you must be: **(a) at least 17 years of age, (b) in a heterosexual relationship of one month or more with someone who is at least 17 years of age, and (c) able recruit your romantic relationship partner and bring him/her with you to the testing session. I NEED BOTH YOU AND YOUR ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP PARTNER TO PARTICIPATE.**

Name of Researcher/Research Assistant: Samantha Scapinello

Means of Contacting Researcher if You Need to Cancel/Reschedule your Appointment: sscapinello@hotmail.com

Participation in this study requires 20 minutes.

X Participants who are registered in courses that permit students to earn bonus marks may earn one bonus mark for participating in this study. Participants who are not registered in courses that permit students to earn bonus marks may earn a lottery ticket.

_____ Bonus marks are not awarded for participation in this study but there is another incentive as follows: _____

_____ There is no incentive for participating in this study.

Date Posted: _____ Psychology Participant Pool Stamp: _____

If there are problems with this posting, please contact the Senior Participant Pool Assistant by email at parveengrewal@hotmail.com.

Sign-up Sheet

Please place your, and your romantic relationship partner's initials under the time slot of your choosing. On your chosen date, at your chosen time, go to the assigned room with your romantic relationship partner.

DATE:
TIME:
ROOM:

1. _____ and _____
2. _____ and _____
3. _____ and _____
4. _____ and _____
5. _____ and _____
6. _____ and _____

DATE:
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6. _____ and _____

Appendix F

The Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Predicting Romantic Relationship Satisfaction using Three Self-Disclosure Variables

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Samantha Scapinello, from the Psychology department at the University of Windsor. The study will be supervised by Dr. Ken Cramer and the results will be contributed to a master's thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Samantha Scapinello (_____) or Dr. Ken Cramer (519-253-3000, #2239).

• **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to predict romantic relationship satisfaction using personal self-disclosure, partner self-disclosure, and the difference between the two.

• **PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to fill out a questionnaire made up of four different measures. The first measure, the Background Inventory, consists of ten demographic questions, such as, "*What is your birth date?*" and "*How long have you and your romantic relationship partner been a couple?*". The second measure, the Self-Disclosure Index, assesses an individual's tendency to self-disclose. The final two measures, the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale and the Relationship Assessment Scale, both assess an individual's romantic relationship satisfaction. The entire questionnaire will take you approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Research findings will be made available, after April 31st 2004, upon request. Simply contact Samantha Scapinello at sscapinello@hotmail.com for a copy.

• **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Participation in this study may prompt you and/or your partner to re-evaluate your romantic relationship. A negative re-evaluation may result in the termination of your romantic relationship. If you experience romantic relationship difficulties and would like assistance you may contact either of the on-campus services listed below:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. The Student Counselling Centre | 2. The Psychological Services Centre |
| CAW Centre | 326 Sunset Avenue |
| 519-253-3000, #4616 | 519-253-3000, #7012 |

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND SOCIETY**

Besides experiencing what it is like to be a research subject you are not expected to benefit from this research. This research, however, is expected to assist therapists in selecting appropriate treatment for romantically dissatisfied men and women.

- **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will receive one bonus mark (if you are registered in a psychology course that permits students to earn bonus marks) or a lottery ticket (if you are not registered in a psychology course that permits students to earn bonus marks) simply for agreeing to participate in this study. In other words, you will receive compensation even if you decide not to complete the questionnaire.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. The investigator will keep your consent form and questionnaire in a locked filing cabinet for five years. After this time, all research data will be destroyed.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study.

- **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact:

Research Ethics Co-ordinator
University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario
N9B 3P4

Telephone: 519-253-3000, #3916
E-mail: ethics@uwindor.ca

- **SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT**

I understand the information provided for the study "Predicting Romantic Relationship Satisfaction using Three Self-Disclosure Variables" as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject

Signature of Subject

Date

- **SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

In my judgement, the subject is voluntarily and knowingly giving consent to participate in this research study.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Table 1

Correlations, Descriptives, and Internal Consistency Analyses for Self-Disclosure and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction Measures

Measure	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
1. Males' self-disclosure (MSD)	.48**	-.46**	.44**	.42**	.43**	.33**	32.91	4.64	.79
2. Females' self-disclosure (FSD)	—	-.09	.26*	.18	.53**	.35**	34.36	4.16	.78
3. Discrepancy between MSD and FSD		—	-.11	-.13	-.05	-.07	3.57	3.11	—
4. Males' romantic relationship satisfaction (RAS)			—	.80**	.47**	.51**	30.58	3.48	.79
5. Males' romantic relationship satisfaction (DSS)				—	.39**	.58**	35.58	4.58	.82
6. Females' romantic relationship satisfaction (RAS)					—	.69**	31.55	3.28	.81
7. Females' romantic relationship satisfaction (DSS)						—	36.28	3.87	.76

Note. $N = 115$.* $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$.

Table 2

Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Males' and Females' Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Dependent Variable	Step	Prediction Variable	R^2	F	MSE	β	t	constant
Males' Romantic Relationship Satisfaction								
Measured by the RAS	1	Males' self-disclosure	0.19	27.10**	9.85	0.44	5.21**	19.72
Measured by the DSS	1	Males' self-disclosure	0.18	24.32**	17.39	0.42	4.93**	21.91
Females' Romantic Relationship Satisfaction								
Measured by the RAS	1	Interaction term	0.28	44.75**	7.78	0.53	6.69**	23.41
Measured by the DSS	1	Interaction term	0.15	19.25**	12.93	0.38	4.39**	29.41

Note. $N = 115$.

** $p < .001$.

Table 3

*Mean Romantic Relationship Satisfaction (RAS) for Females at**Low and High Levels of Males' and Females' Self-Disclosure*

Males' self-disclosure	Females' self-disclosure	
	Low	High
Low	29.77 ^a (<i>n</i> = 43)	32.61 ^b (<i>n</i> = 28)
High	31.95 ^b (<i>n</i> = 19)	33.11 ^b (<i>n</i> = 25)

*Note . Means with the different superscript letters are significantly**different than each other at $p = .05$ level.*

Table 4

*Mean Romantic Relationship Satisfaction (DSS) for Females at**Low and High Levels of Males' and Females' Self-Disclosure*

Males' self-disclosure	Females' self-disclosure	
	Low	High
Low	34.90 ^a (<i>n</i> = 43)	37.25 ^b (<i>n</i> = 28)
High	36.32 ^{ab} (<i>n</i> = 19)	37.54 ^b (<i>n</i> = 25)

*Note . Means with the different superscript letters are significantly**different than each other at $p = .05$ level.*

Vita Auctoris

Samantha S. Scapinello was born in 1978 in Kitchener, Ontario. She graduated from Grand River Collegiate Institute in 1997. From there she went on to the University of Guelph where she obtained a B.Sc. in Psychology in 2001. She is currently a candidate for the Master's degree in Psychology at the University of Windsor and hopes to graduate in Spring 2004.